

DOCTOR WHO

Re-Incarnated

A PIECE OF ADVICE

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DOCTOR WHO: RE-INCARNATED PRESENTS

A Piece of Advice

An original Doctor Who story

By Alex Smith

DOCTOR WHO: RE-INCARNATED

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The temple was about as high as anything could be. It was perched precariously on the topmost peak of the highest mountain on the entire planet. Clouds passed both above and below it, lazily swirling into abstract shapes and patterns. When the temple had first been constructed, several centuries ago, the Monk Elders had claimed that the low valleys and high cliffs that surrounded it would help modulate the psychokinetic energy generated from the sacred rituals, allowing the brotherhood to bring themselves closer to the psychic trance state that was so vital for several of their ceremonies. In truth, the Monk Elders just liked a bit of peace and quiet. So they had built their temple in the quietest place they could find, and warned everyone else to stay away from the mountains, lest they 'disturb the flow of psychokinetic energy.' Several centuries later, the monks were still amused by the ignorance of the villagers below.

It was a still, airless night when the man arrived at the temple. To get there, he had traversed the steep, treacherous paths of the mountainside for hours on end, following the thin passages and ascending the steep staircases hewn into the rock. Now, he stood just a few steps away from his destination, and allowed himself a quick grin of satisfaction. Then he stepped forward and, grasping the ancient stone knocker tightly, banged on the door.

Brother Tiba had been right on the brink of dozing off at his post on the night watch, and almost toppled backwards off of his chair in alarm as the heavy sound reverberated through the temple. He stood sharply, his red cloak rippling across him, and immediately he hastened to the entryway, where a tall, ornately carved wooden door stood tall.

'Greetings, traveller,' he called through the doorway to the stranger outside. 'Apologies for the delay. The night has been long, and I'm afraid I drifted off...'

The man outside laughed at that, in a voice that Tiba did not recognise. From beyond the door, the stranger's voice floated through.

'While I nodded, nearly napping, suddenly there came a tapping, as of someone gently rapping -'

- Tiba fumbled with the sturdy lock, and the door swung open -

'-rapping at my chamber door.' He finished with a smile. The stranger's face was young, and quite pale, with friendly twinkling eyes. His clothes were dark, aside from the red scarf that hung around his neck, and a hat perched itself on his head.

'It's from a poem by Edgar Allan Poe, if you were wondering. Cool guy. I said to him, Eddie, you need to cut the verse where the raven turns out to be a Nestene duplicate with a faulty signal, and he says to me, but Simon - I'll explain why he thought my name was Simon later - surely you cannot possibly expect me to -'

'Doctor,' Tiba interrupted, for now he recognised the man who stood before him. Not from his clothes, or his voice, or his face, but he recognised him. For Tiba was one of the brotherhood, and this brotherhood do not see with their eyes. They see with their minds, in ways which harness so many more dimensions than the three we are used to, and Tiba recognised the Doctor from his thoughts.

The two men shook hands on the doorstep, and Tiba invited the Doctor inside. He had visited the temple many times, to seek advice or help from the monks, and each time it was Tiba who greeted him.

'Night duty again, Tiba?' said the Doctor, a look of mock frustration on his face. 'What did you do this time? Not stealing from the pantry again, I hope...'

'I volunteered, actually,' said the grinning figure.

'So there wasn't any... Monk-y business involved?'

And with that the Doctor burst into laughter, a fit of giggling that would surely awaken the entire brotherhood. After a few long moments, Tiba clapped him on the back, and the Doctor stifled his laughs in his fist.

'I see your latest regeneration has not deprived you of your, ah, *unique* sense of humour, Doctor.'

The Doctor stopped laughing at that, and looked straight at Tiba. It was an uncanny thing; rather than looking into Tiba's eyes, the Doctor was looking directly into his mind. Such was a side effect of seeing as the brotherhood sees, and Tiba had never gotten used to it.

'My latest regeneration... Yes. I'm here to talk about that, actually.' The Doctor paused, and glanced over his shoulder. 'But first, how do you like the sound of a midnight feast? I'm starving.'

Tiba shook his head. 'Unless you have brought provisions, I'm afraid I have nothing to eat.'

The Doctor shrugged, and causally said,

'Well, we could always steal from the pantry.'

They sat together, in the darkest room in the temple, lit only by candlelight. On the left, the Doctor, thin and cheery, hat at a jaunty angle, scarf tightly insulating him against the chill. On the right, brother Tiba sat, his face impossible to put an age to, his eyes warm and his hair cropped. The low wooden walls surrounded them, hemmed them in, pressed them down. Piles and piles of crates, filled with all manner of foods and delicacies from across the planet, rose from floor to ceiling. The two of them were eating from one such crate, feasting on small, colourful fruits that Tiba described as 'a rare delicacy, picked by the most agile of our brethren from the cliff top trees,' and that the Doctor described as 'it looks a bit like an octopus if you squint at it.' After they were done, they moved onto a different crate, where they found small, round loaves of fresh bread, and then to a rotund barrel stocked with sweet red sauce.

'Nothing would be more tiresome than eating and drinking,' the Doctor said, resting his head against a wooden pillar, 'if God had not made them a pleasure as well as a necessity.'

'Another quote?' Tiba asked in reply, eating in measured bites and chewing slowly, savouring every mouthful.

'François-Marie Arouet. Or Voltaire – that was his pseudonym,' the Doctor smiled. 'I remember explaining to him the downsides of fake names. Fran my man, I told him, you should reconsider on this one, or you'll end up trying to explain to Edgar Allan Poe why your name isn't really Simon.'

'Have you met all of your literary inspirations, Doctor?' Tiba said with a laugh. The Doctor put down his empty plate.

'I've met most of them, certainly. Hey, they got some of their best lines from me!' he laughed back, and the two of them shared a chuckle for a moment. Then Tiba put down his own plate, and they stood as one.

'Where does all of this food come from, anyway?' the Doctor asked. 'I can't imagine there's a supermarket round the corner.'

'The Great Mind provides for us,' Tiba smiled. He raised his arms skywards. The Doctor raised his eyebrows skywards.

'Seriously?'

'No, we send people down to the village from time to time to pick things up.'

'Ah.'

They walked up the broad stairway out of the pantry, and began to head in the general direction of the channelling chambers. They passed ornate statues and sculptures, of figures from old scriptures or of members of the brethren from days gone by. A mirror, hung in a gilded frame, reflected the Doctor's bright eyes, and Tiba's warm ones. Tapestries worn with age draped down the walls. Occasionally, they would run into another member of the brotherhood, out for a quiet night stroll or stuck on night duty, and Tiba would share with them a nod of greeting. The monks always seemed perplexed by the Doctor, until he winked or flashed a grin, and then they would recognise his mind and smile back.

Eventually, they came to a door with no handle, just a smooth lock in the dead centre. Tiba pulled the ring of keys from around his neck and slotted one of them into the keyhole; immediately the door clicked and groaned open. Tiba gestured with one hand, and the Doctor walked inside.

The room was the complete opposite of the pantry; the walls were high and decorated with a multitude of colours and art forms. There was no ceiling, and the room peered upwards to a sunny sky – no, the Doctor realised, it was just a painting, a perfect picture of a sunny sky etched into the roof over their heads. So realistic and masterful, he'd been deceived into thinking it was real for a moment, like a dog barking at its reflection. An illusion of reality.

'Doctor?' Tiba motioned to a raised stage at the centre of the room, made of gleaming marble, that stood a few inches higher than the floor. Tiba walked over to the platform and sat, crossed legged, on one side; the Doctor sprawled down on the other, loosening his scarf as he did so.

'The channelling chamber,' Tiba introduced it, with a wave of his arm. 'You've been here before, of course.'

'You've redecorated,' the Doctor replied, pointing to the ceiling. 'I don't like it.'

Tiba laughed. 'Never were a fan of change, eh?'

The Doctor looked down from the ceiling and peered across the small space separating them.

'Change always has consequences. Not all of them are good,' he said. Then, he took off his hat, and laid it down on the ground beside him.

'Shall we begin?' he said.

Simultaneously, the two men leaned forward, their arms outstretched, their fingertips brushing against each other. The air around them began to crackle slightly. Tiba closed his eyes and opened his mind, his face a mask of concentration. A ripple of energy passed between them, and quite suddenly, they were somewhere else.

The Doctor opened his eyes. They were stood on the temple roof, peering down over the harsh edge. He shivered and stepped back.

'Where are we?'

'These are my memories,' Tiba replied. He motioned to his left, and the Doctor saw a second Tiba, identical to the man stood beside him, lying flat a few paces away from them, staring up at the sky. This second man was blurry and insubstantial, and as the Doctor watched, he flickered slightly. 'The roof is a great place for meditation,' Tiba muttered. 'But that is not why we are here. Come, let us visit your memories.'

The Doctor nodded, and closed his eyes again. Wind began to rush past them, as if they were moving at great speed, and when the Doctor opened his eyes again, they were somewhere more familiar.

The soothing hum of the TARDIS console enveloped them as the Doctor leaned back against it. Dark light wavered around them. The room was cold.

'Your ship.' Tiba glanced around, smiling. He had stood inside the TARDIS before, but it never failed to fascinate him. 'Which reminds me – why did you park down in the village, so far away from the temple?'

The Doctor looked away. 'I fancied a walk through the mountains.'

'Oh?' Tiba's eyes sparkled. 'Really?'

'Mountains are hard to land on,' the Doctor grumbled. Tiba chuckled softly, but was cut off in mid-laugh as a shadowy figure burst into the room.

The darkness of the room around them hid his face, but it was clear from the way his muscles clenched that he was in agony. He stumbled up to the console and reached *through* the Doctor, his intangible form flickering as he grasped at a heavy iron lever. The TARDIS doors swung closed as he yanked the lever down, only to collapse to the floor and convulse in pain.

'Doctor, these are your memories,' Tiba said, clearly agitated by the man's pain. 'Where are you to help him?'

'That's me.' The Doctor said, his eyes stony. He stepped aside as the man's breathing became ragged.

'What?'

'I was fighting, Tiba. Far away, against a powerful enemy. But I won, in the end. I won, they lost, I saved the day. Everybody lived,' the Doctor smiled.

'Except you.'

'Except me. That was a sacrifice I had to make.'

'So this is where you regenerate. I see.'

The Doctor laughed. The man on the floor, the past Doctor, was starting to slow, as his breathing grew shallower.

'Not quite. Which of my bodies do you think this is, Tiba? Which of my lives?'

'I don't know. Tenth? Eleventh?' Tiba guessed.

'Thirteenth.' The Doctor pointed at the body of his former self, who's breath was barely a whisper.

'That is my thirteenth body.'

Tiba inhaled sharply. 'But Doctor-'

'I know. Watch.'

And just like that, the man stopped struggling completely, and lay still. Then the room blurred, and the TARDIS console faded from view. Everything around them was black.

'We just watched you die,' Tiba murmured. The Doctor nodded.

‘What are you, then? A past life, hoping to change the course of history?’

‘Ha! No, not on this occasion. Watch a little longer, and you will see...’

Slowly, the world resolved itself around them. The TARDIS console swam back in view, and so did the past Doctor. A prone figure lying face down on the grille floor. There was something different about him – his clothes seemed baggier, hanging loosely off of his unmoving figure.

‘Death never fails to sadden me,’ Tiba lamented quietly ‘It is so brutal, so unforgiving, so-’

‘COLD!’ yelled the past Doctor, leaping to his feet. Tiba cried out in shock and fell backwards, but the real Doctor caught him, and hauled him upright.

‘Chilly, frosty, freezing, brrr! Has someone turned the heating off?!’ cried the flickering form of the past Doctor. The light hit his face, and Tiba realised that he had changed – his form was no longer that of the tall man they had watched stumble inside only moments before. Instead, he wore bright eyes and a wide smile, his features identical to those of the real Doctor stood beside him.

‘This is my genesis,’ the real Doctor said. ‘This is the beginning of my new life. My fourteenth regeneration.’

He took Tiba’s hand as the past Doctor stopped mid-stride as he circled the console.

‘Wait...’ the past Doctor frowned. ‘How did I get here?’

The real Doctor leaned over and whispered in Tiba’s ear. ‘This is where I realised I should be dead. You’ve seen everything you need to see. Now, I need your help.’

The past Doctor began muttering to himself, rubbing his temples, completely unaware of the two men watching him. Of course, they weren’t really there at all – it was just an illusion, a projection of the past. After a moment, Tiba nodded.

‘Very well.’

The wind picked up around them, and they were gone.

Back in the temple, the two figures sat opposite each other opened their eyes, pulled their fingertips away from each other, and leaned back, breathing heavily. The Doctor’s arms gave way beneath him and he fell down completely, flat on his back. Tiba, however, was on his feet immediately.

‘Doctor, this is – this is, this, I don’t even know how to describe it. It’s extraordinary.’

‘But what does it *mean*?’ the Doctor asked, slowly pulling himself to his feet. The energy from the psychic channelling began to disperse, the room’s complex ventilation drawing the power from the room and expelling it.

Tiba faltered. ‘I... I don’t know.’ He admitted. ‘I’ve never seen this before, and I know more about Time Lords than any of my brethren.’

‘There were ways for Time Lords to extend their lives,’ the Doctor said, as he replaced his hat atop his head. ‘But they all involved other Time Lords. I just don’t understand how this could have happened. I came straight here because I thought you, of all people, would be able to solve the mystery of my death. Or rather, the mystery of my life.’

‘Straight here?’ Tiba interjected.

‘Well, okay, I may have made a few side outings along the way...’

‘You went to a clothes shop.’

‘To find a cool hat,’ the Doctor defended.

‘And then a farm.’

‘I got caught in a twister, that wasn’t my fault.’

‘And then a fancy dress party on the fourth moon of Galnax.’

‘That was... I had to... Oh, shut up. I’m never letting you into my memories again,’ the Doctor sulked, folding his arms. Tiba laughed, and clapped a hand on his shoulder.

‘But seriously, Doctor, this is fascinating. A unique happening, nothing like it ever seen before.’

‘And you really don’t know what could have caused it?’ the Doctor asked.

‘I’m sorry. This is something new to me. It’s not even as if you regenerated again – you literally died and then came back to life in a new body. More like... re-incarnation, I suppose.’

The Doctor sighed sadly. ‘Well then Tiba, I’m sorry I wasted your time here.’ He turned to leave.

‘Doctor, please stay. I will awake the elders, unlock the ancient scrolls. Perhaps we can find some reference to a Time Lord living beyond his time?’

‘Time Lord beyond his time. Very poetic,’ the Doctor said. ‘But you said so yourself, you know more about my people than anyone in this temple.’

He turned to leave the room, and Tiba hurried after him. The Doctor quickly retraced their steps through the labyrinthine corridors, pulling his jacket more tightly around his shoulders.

‘Where are you going, Doctor?’

‘I’m going to try and find answers elsewhere, Tiba. Somewhere in the universe, there has to be someone who can solve this mystery.’

They took a sharp left and passed down a narrow wooden hall. Tiba quickened his pace so he was striding alongside the Doctor.

‘I don’t want to dampen your enthusiasm, but I highly doubt you’ll be able to find anyone who can tell you more about Time Lord biology than me,’ Tiba said.

‘That’s why I came to you first. But if you can’t help me, I’ll have to find someone who can.’

The hallway opened up into a wider passage. The Doctor brushed past a worn figurine stood on a high plinth, and rounded another corner. Impossibly, they had already arrived at the main door. Tiba twisted his head over his shoulder, craned his neck round to view the path they had taken, and realised the Doctor had taken them through a shortcut – an entranceway hidden by shadows, only visible once you were stood beside it. The Doctor had perceived it where Tiba had passed by, unnoticing.

The Doctor slowly pushed open the heavy front door of the temple and stepped out into the cool night of the mountaintop. For the first time in a long while, a breeze stirred the air, fluttering the Doctor’s jacket as it went. The Doctor smiled faintly, and held up his hand, allowing the faint wind to rustle through his fingers.

‘The answer, my friend, is blowin’ in the wind,’ he murmured softly. ‘The answer is blowin’ in the wind.’

He turned back to Tiba. ‘That’s another quote, by the way.’

‘Let me guess. Um... Edgar Allan Poe?’

‘Bob Dylan.’

‘He was my next guess.’

‘You don’t even know who he is.’

‘I’m a very good guesser.’

The Doctor turned around fully so he was facing his friend, his eyes framed by the dim light emanating from within the temple. He was smiling slightly.

‘It’s been good to see you, Tiba,’ he said.

‘And you, my friend,’ Tiba returned the smile. The Doctor leaned forwards, and they shook hands. The Doctor went to turn away, but Tiba kept his grip on the Doctor’s hand.

‘Doctor, before you go, there’s something I’d like to give you. A piece of advice, from me to you.’ The Doctor turned back, and Tiba breathed in the fresh mountain air.

‘You can’t carry on like this. The Great Mind, the universe itself, some random happenstance – something out there has granted you another chance, a whole life to live as your own. You simply can’t waste that life wishing yourself back into the grave! You need to move on, accept that you might never understand what has happened to you, and just *live*.’

The Doctor looked solemn. ‘But there has to be an answer, Tiba. Somewhere.’

‘Not every question needs an answer, my friend,’ the monk replied.

For a moment, the Doctor’s mind clouded over; Tiba caught a glimpse of a tall, blond girl, stood in a large wooden building of some sort, surrounded by bales of hay. Then another flashed memory, of the Doctor cradling the body of a wrinkled, grey creature – and just as suddenly, the visions were over.

‘I’ve heard those words before,’ the Doctor muttered under his breath. Then, after a moment that felt longer than it was, he added ‘but maybe I didn’t see how they applied to me then. I see it now!’

He looked up at his friend again, and this time the smile on his lips was wider, more genuine.

‘Thanks for the advice, Tiba. You’re right, maybe I should just concentrate on being alive. I could have some adventures, couldn’t I? I could go back to that party on Galnax’s fourth moon, I could, ooh, I could meet Bob Dylan! We could do a duet, how about that?’

Tiba laughed. ‘Whatever you want Doctor. It’s your life.’

‘And I’m going to live it!’ the Doctor yelled. Tipping his hat to the monk, he spun on his heel, and set off at a speedy pace down the mountain path. Tiba shook his head, bemused, and slowly pulled the door shut as the Doctor’s form faded to a shadow in the night.

From a wide corridor to the left, a young monk sprang out, panting and wide eyed.

‘Brother Tiba, b-brother Tiba!’ he gasped, his pasty face twisted into an expression of alarm. His gangly arms were shivering beneath his robes.

Tiba was instantly alert. ‘Brother Staven, what is it? What’s happened?’

‘There’s been – there’s been a, um, there’s been,’ Staven stumbled over his words, clearly shaken.

‘There’s been a, a r-robbery, brother Tiba! In the p-pantry, food missing, there’s, there’s a th-thief loose in the temple!’

Tiba deflated, his sudden alarm replaced with mirth. He resisted the urge to laugh.

‘Oh, dear. We can’t have that. Follow me!’

Staven fell into step behind Tiba as he strode in the general direction of the pantry. As soon as the younger man was out of his line of sight, he rolled his eyes, and began running over potential excuses he could use. With a friend like the Doctor, he reflected, no wonder he was always getting himself involved in monk-y business.

Quietly, breaking up the sound of their light footfalls, brother Tiba chuckled to himself.

The blue box fitted in perfectly with the subdued colours of its surroundings. The villagers had painted their homes in respectful shades of blue and brown, hues that were at once completely inoffensive and utterly boring. The Doctor paid the buildings no mind as he stepped down towards the TARDIS. Instead, he looked out over the village, towards the horizon, where the morning sun was just about to break. The dawn cast its rays across the town and toward the mountains the Doctor had just descended from. He leaned silently against the side of his box and just stood, motionless, for a few minutes, watching the slightly-larger-than-Earth's sun form in the distance. He began to think about all of the things he hadn't even considered on his walk up the mountain, when he had first arrived – that the planet had two mountain ranges, on opposite continents, each almost equal in size, and how beautifully symmetrical they were. He thought of how – because, apart from the brotherhood, no-one here understood the concepts of 'planets' or 'aliens' – the planet had no proper name, and was referred to either by its official designation of An-6, or, by the more wittily minded in the galaxy, Twin Peaks. He thought of the sunrise, and how it filled the world with light and life. He hadn't been living properly, he realised. Too busy trying to solve a mystery to embrace the world around him. That was all going to change.

'Bob Dylan,' he whispered, clicking open the TARDIS door at last. 'Maybe the answer really will be blowin' in the wind...'

He turned, and cocked his head. 'Well, wind? Any answers blowing through you today?'

The wind, unsurprisingly, did not reply, but instead continued to swirl around him lazily.

'Thought not,' he smiled, and he pulled the door shut behind him, off to find adventure, excitement, and quite possibly a good cup of tea.

As he and his box faded away, the wind continued to blow and bluster, picking up strength and speed under the new morning light. And faintly, whispering around in the air, a voice could be heard in the wind, as if the universe was mumbling in its sleep.

'Not ready yet, Doctor. Not ready yet,' said the voice, and then it dispersed and the wind was gone, and the new day was as still and airless as the night before.

Coming next month to
Doctor Who: Re-Incarnated...

The Heavy Scent of Violence

By Mark Lee

'Maybe not today, maybe not tomorrow, but soon...'

A killer is stalking the streets of London, and four people are already dead. The Doctor and his friends might be able to stop the Ripper – but can they do so before he claims his final victim? Or will Jack's escape be set in motion by the complex machinations of time?

December 1st 2011



About The Author

Alex Smith lives in Merseyside, England. He spends most of his time procrastinating, unless he can think of something better to do. When he does eventually put pen to paper, he writes short stories, Doctor Who fanfiction, and bad poetry. He enjoys writing about himself in the third person.

You can follow Alex on twitter @KingOrokos, or visit his blog at NotEntirelyIncoherent.blogspot.com.



'Greetings, traveller...'

High atop a mountain, there stands an ancient monastery, a temple where the brotherhood make their home and lead their lives. They are intelligent, thoughtful, wise, and they make it their duty to help those in need. Today, the man who needs their help is the Doctor.



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